

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original files: “Letter Nov. 11th 1863 pg. 1-3.tif” & “Letter Nov. 11th 1863 pg. 4.tif”

Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

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Headquarter 23 Regiment Michigan Volunteer Infantry  
Camp Near Loudon, Tennessee, November 11<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Wife,

I received yours of the 27<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> ??? with the postage stamps and glad I was to hear from you and to hear that you & Frankie were so well and I hope you will continue so I hasten to acknowledge the receipt of the letter and stamps tonight. As the mail leaves again tomorrow for the north, I want you to know as soon as possible that I have been fortunate enough to get mustered as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Company D, and am now ready for pay as such. I was mustered back to August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1862. I now can assume to the dignity of the position I now occupy as Acting Adjutant of the Regiment without that feeling of awkwardness that I did before. I used to feel as though I was assuming what I had no right to. Now, I am all right and I hope another year will amount to something as my wages will now be one hundred and five dollars a month instead of twenty-one, and no more risk to run. After taking out the tax I probably will get about one hundred and two dollars a month. We must be economical and see if we cannot lay up something. I will send to you every pay day what I do not actually need and you must use what you want and lay by the rest for future wants. I cannot draw rations

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now, so I have to buy my living and as I have no money now the commissaries sell to officers at cost and on credit until pay day when it is taken out of our pay. I bought me a sword and sash for \$25.00, for which I am to pay for when I get my pay. I got it very cheap as it is as good almost as new and cost \$34.00, and as I had got to have one of my own I had to buy one. The one I have been using is a borrowed one and would have to be returned. I thought it best to get one of my own. I am glad you saw Lieutenant *{Oscar S.} Davis* for he could tell you more than I can attempt to write or so could Eugene Burk. The letter you spoke of I sent by Sergeant *{“Jerry” Jeremy H.} Overton*, who I suppose is on his way back here now. I hope you saw him and had Tip send me a pair of gloves by him, for they are what I most need and what I cannot get here. We are beginning to have some cool weather here. The last three nights we have had a white frost every night and there is every prospect of another tonight. The can have their sunny south when the rebels are all extinguished and I will be content with the north, for we have as warm weather in Michigan as I have seen here. However, we manage to keep very comfortable. I have a big log heap on fire before my tent so I do not suffer any. We do not get much news here until it gets to be so old

that it is of no account. You said you heard that the 23<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps had a fight. Well, Susan, that should not worry you, for there is more or less skirmishing or fighting every few days by some portions of the corps, mostly done by the mounted portion. Our regiment has done none here yet, nor do we see any prospect of a fight although we see a plenty of rebels on the other side of the river and they see us. You must not get frightened

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at every report you hear, for our regiment is not the only regiment in the Army Corps, for the corps consists of five divisions, our (2<sup>nd</sup>) division consists of two brigades of four regiments each and two batteries, one to each brigade, making eight regiments and two batteries in one division. The other divisions are as large, so you see we are with the 9<sup>th</sup> Army Corps quite a decent army and no small force of rebels can defeat us when we are all together, which we can be in less than two days if it was necessary and even sooner, for every regiment can get to Knoxville *{TN}* in one day from either way. I will send you a Knoxville paper and you may let anyone read it you may have a mind to. It is the first number of the issue and is highly prized here by both citizens and soldiers. It is the Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator, edited by Parson *{William Gannaway}* Brownlow, who was driven from the state two years ago by the rebels on account of his Union sentiments.

I wrote to Frank today and to you a long letter last Sunday and as everything is quiet and has been, I have no news of any importance to communicate. Our whole regiment except a very few are on picket today and will be relieved in the morning by another regiment. So instead of taking a small detail from every regiment each day, we go on picket by regiments one to twice around and so on. I do not go, for my duties are confined more to the headquarters of the regiment. We get our mail regular every two or three days, which is not so bad considering the way it has to be carried and distance by pack animals.

You wanted I should get a furlough this winter and come home. Well, Susan, I dare not ask for such a thing at present for we got notice none would be granted now at present

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as there is other officers that have not been home their chance comes first and under the circumstances that I was home last spring and it not being a year yet, my application for a leave of absence could not be based on sufficient grounds to meet with an approval, so the consequence would be if I made an application for a leave of absence it would be respectfully returned disapproved. I make this statement because I know it would be the case at present. However, I will make the attempt as soon as I have sufficient reasons to believe that I would be successful. You must not think it my fault if it is not as soon as we would like, for I will embrace the first opportunity that affords to make another visit home. I would like to see you and little Frankie very much as much so as you would like to see me, but I cannot now so we must be patient and the time will come when I

can come home to stay. Then we need not be sorry that we have now endure each other's absence. I know the time seems long, but we must endure it the best we can and the better spirits we do it the shorter the time, so do not get discouraged but keep up your spirits and I will do the same. So you must not worry on my account for I am safe and comfortable as anyone can be in the army, with good prospects ahead.

If I was home I might get drafted. Then I would be worse off than I am now. While here I fear no draft, but hope it will be done to the sorrow of some of the northern copperheads.

I do not fancy the idea of your keeping house alone for I fear you would be more lonesome and be subject to more inconveniences than you would if you stay where you are. I cannot but think that you would suffer alone this winter and I should be imagining that I could see you around out in the snow hunting for wood or cutting it and other like chores which would have to be done. So for my sake do not do it for I shall worry ten times more about you, while now I know you are comfortable. So take good care of our little Frankie and yourself and remember me to all inquiring friends if I have forgot to mention their names. I will write again soon and a good long letter, too. So good night dear wife and believe me, ever

Your Affectionate Husband, D. D. Keeler

Head Quarters 23<sup>d</sup> Regt Michigan Vols  
Camp near Loudon Tenn November 11<sup>th</sup> 1863

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